

**Press Release**

**Childrens' Day Special Workshop**

**Children in Tamil Nadu : Progress, Challenges and Way Forward**

Coinciding with the celebrations of Children's Day, a two day Workshop on "Children in Tamil Nadu : Progress, Challenges and Way Forward", had been organised by the Government of Tamil Nadu in association with UNICEF in Hotel Rain Tree, Teynampet, Chennai on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2019. Hon'ble Minister of Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme Department inaugurated the workshop and delivered inaugural address.

The Hon'ble Minister of Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme Department appreciated the initiative taken for having arranged this workshop, highlighting the major schemes implemented by the Government of Tamil Nadu for the welfare of Children on Education, Health, Nutrition, Protection, on convergence of work of Departments, NGOs, Corporates, working in participation with people in the best interest of the children their growth, development to safeguard their rights and that the Government of Tamil Nadu will achieve the goals envisaged under UN SDG.

Children from Government schools in tribal areas of Tiruvanamalai and Vellore districts and students from Chennai schools participated in the inaugural session. They shared their aspirations and dreams of the future society, including on Child friendly infrastructure, pollution, safety, abuse and protection of children in slums.

The workshop had eight sessions on the themes relevant for children viz., Education, Health, Nutrition, Sports, Arts, Child Protection and various other topics on inclusive planning for Children. The main purpose of this workshop aimed to look at the implementation of various child centric programmes in the State and to explore how the policies meet the rights and aspirations of the children, to come out with various solutions of work with partnerships and collaborations with NGOs, Civil Society Organisations, Corporates under CSR and to find out ways and means to arrive at reliable data so as to evolve a monitoring framework and link them to Sustainable Development Goals, and ensure that no child is left behind.

“Leaving No one behind” (LNOB) was one of the main themes of focus of the workshop which is a fundamental principle of Sustainable Development Goals. Children who are differently abled, migrant children, children in institutional care, child labour, bonded labour, children affected by natural calamities and disasters, trans-gender children, HIV+ve children require special attention and strategies to reach them in addition to the very many government schemes for them.

The Head of UNICEF, Chennai, while appreciating the key role played by Government in the sectors connected to children spoke on the focus on policy and public investments targeted to improve outcomes.

The Chief Secretary to Government participated in the valedictory session and in the concluding remarks, he stated that the State is committed in working for the children and is looking to further improve and is open to ideas and rectify any issues pointed out for welfare of children. It was highlighted that key areas for further work

includes creating the environment for children to enjoy their childhood alongwith developing to their full potential in all fields to improve access inclusiveness, provide safe and quality hostels, redesign strategy, re-orient schemes, institutionalise change, increase awareness and most importantly ensure safety and protection for children.

Senior officials from State Government Departments of School Education, Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme, Labour & Employment, Arts & Culture, Backward Classes Welfare, Most Backward Classes & Denotified Communities Welfare, Adi-Dravidar and Tribal Welfare, Integrated Child Development Services, Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation, Tamil Nadu Health System Project, Public Health and Preventive Medicine participated in the workshop. Senior officials from UNICEF, Regional Director NIOS, representatives from various NGOs, Experts, Academicians, Civil Society Organisations, teachers and Panchayat level Federation Member participated.

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